



COMMUNITY INPUT

Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

May 21, 2012

This document is the ninth of regular updates to be provided to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force on community input received during the bond development process.

This report provides public comments and input received between May 15th and May 21st, 2012 from comments provided via email sent to bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov (Organization of comments provided by staff.)

Community Projects

- Greetings, I urge the City of Austin Bond Election Advisory Task Force to identify and recommend the Austin Planetarium's science museum, planetarium and technology center as a project for funding in the City of Austin 2012 Bond election. Furthermore, I urge the Austin City Council to include the Austin Planetarium project in the City of Austin 2012 bond package for the proposed amount of \$3 million. Austin, TX is the largest city in the nation without a planetarium and it also lacks a full-spectrum science museum. In a city that is touted as Silicon Hills the conspicuous absence of these crucial community assets is unacceptable. A facility, such as the one proposed by the Austin Planetarium, is certain to enhance the community in a variety of ways. It will provide an unparalleled educational destination for area schools to enjoy on field trips; it will provide a place for the science-minded technology workforce to enjoy with their families, thus aiding in the recruitment and retention of the technology workforce; it will offer a venue for the robust technology community of Austin to display the incredible innovations and products that are developed right here in our backyard; it will create a new tourist destination, enhancing the experience of visitors to the State Capital and increase revenue generated in the local tourism and hospitality industries; it will stand as a world-class model of architecture and sustainability, and be a source of pride for all Texans; it will entertain, educate and inspire our community to pursue academic paths and careers in the important fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The time has come for the City of Austin to help with the development of a science museum, planetarium and technology center in Austin. Please include the Austin Planetarium on the 2012 City of Austin Bond Election Advisory Task Force recommendations as well as the final 2012 Bond package. Together we can finally give Austin and Central Texas a place to expand their horizons and reach for the stars.
- I urge the City of Austin Bond Election Advisory Task Force to identify and recommend the Austin Planetarium's science museum, planetarium and technology center as a project for funding in the City of Austin 2012 Bond election. Furthermore, I urge the Austin City Council to include the Austin Planetarium project in the City of Austin 2012 bond package for the proposed amount of \$3 million. Austin, TX is the largest city in the nation without a planetarium and it also lacks a full-spectrum science museum. In a city that is touted as Silicon Hills the conspicuous absence of these crucial community assets is unacceptable. A facility, such as the one proposed by the Austin Planetarium, is certain to enhance the community in a variety of ways. It will provide an unparalleled educational destination for area schools to enjoy on field trips; it will provide a place for the science-minded technology workforce to enjoy with their families, thus aiding in the recruitment and retention of the technology workforce; it will offer a venue for the robust technology community of Austin to display the incredible innovations and products that are developed right here in our backyard; it will create a new tourist destination, enhancing the experience of visitors to the State Capital and increase revenue generated in the local tourism and hospitality industries; it will stand as a world-class model of architecture and sustainability, and be a source of pride for all Texans; it will entertain, educate and inspire our community to pursue academic paths and

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- **I respectfully request that the Bond Election Advisory Task Force include the Mexic-Arte Museum Building Project in the 2012 City of Austin Bond Package for \$10 million dollars.** Mexic-Arte Museum, a highly respected cultural landmark, is "**The Official Mexican and Mexican American Fine Art Museum of Texas.**" Mexic-Arte Museum has a **28 year history** of outstanding community programming and significant historical and cultural exhibits. Mexic-Arte Museum has served **thousands of children** through tours, after-school programs, workshops, lectures and outreach programs. Mexic-Arte Museum is the only museum in the United States to reach an art exchange **agreement with the government of Mexico** to exhibit its most treasured works of art through an agreement with the National Council for the Arts and Culture. **A new beautiful, iconic and world class museum building** will showcase and teach cultural heritage with dignity and pride for generations to come. The new building will contribute to the vitality of Austin by providing **economic development and bring tourism** that generates business dollars. **A new facility will allow Mexic-Arte Museum:** To increase the amount of space to **52,145 sq. ft.** for exhibits and education programs with added improvements: exhibition galleries, an auditorium, a shop/café, permanent galleries, collection storage, classrooms, a lobby, and public art. To **widen sidewalks and a plaza for outdoor public engagement** in downtown Austin. To **foster major economic development and tourism** creating additional jobs, through museum construction, retail, service, and hospitality industries. To



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increase investments in collateral businesses in the downtown area, housing and other economic activity. The Mexic-Arte Museum has the incredible opportunity to build a world class iconic museum that will transform many lives in a positive manner. I urge you to make this a 'must do' project to put forth to the citizens for the fall bond election. This addition to the bond proposal will help sell the entire package to the citizens of Austin. Thank you for your consideration. I am a native Austinite and my family has lived on West Seventh Street, near downtown, for over 70 years. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University and have worked and been active in the arts in Austin for many years. As an active volunteer with Mexic-Arte Museum in it's many areas I have come to know and understand the mission and the value of this organization to the city and to it's citizens. Thank you for your consideration of our request and our contributions to Austin.

City Facilities- related comments

- I believe it was a mistake to reduce the proposed funding for a new Dougherty Arts Center from \$4M to \$2M. Estimated replacement cost is in excess of \$6M, of which approximately \$2M remains from previous commitments. The principal reason the facility has not already been replaced was that available funding was never quite sufficient. Providing only \$2M for replacement will only extend the postponement for another cycle and result in more money being wasted on keeping the current dilapidated facility limping along. Let's get this done. Incidentally, assessments during the Town Lake Park Master Plan update have indicated no suitable site within Butler Park.
- The Dougherty Arts Center is incredibly valuable for the community. We need to fix the building and tearing it down is a huge delay and people need this great resource for more art and less developers.
- Hello my name is Ivory Newsome you can respond to me at IVRYNEWSOME@yahoo.com. Im calling concerning the Dougherty Arts center and I am extremely upset about its demolition. It is the venue artists like me are looking for its low cost, it has children's facilities, a day care. It was started by a local woman and should be rebuilt and wholeheartedly supported. I would like an email response about this message.
- Hi I am just calling to say I don't see enough money in this bond development package for the Dougherty Arts Center to be rebuilt. The Dougherty is serving 200,000 people a year 40,000 of those are children. It is a popular center with registration for programs closing within the hour. We cant lose these programs and we need more money for the reconstruction. It has been built on a land fill and there's no telling when the EPA will shut us down. Thank you
- I have been a resident and citizen of Austin for 22 years. I am a regular Barton Springs swimmer, and I vote. I request that you **Eliminate the \$2.25M for renovation of the Barton Springs Pool bathhouse** because this is not necessary. The BSP bathhouse was recently brought up to code, has some remodeling and is ADA complaint. The majority of the community does not support the proposed renovations to the BSP bathhouse. \$6M has been spent at BSP already with various master plan projects, it's time to spend money fairly at other parks and recreational facilities. **Fully fund the cemeteries to \$4M.** Currently they are receiving \$2M, but they need \$4M at least. The cemeteries have a critical urgent near-term need that was not identified by city staff, even though the cemeteries meet the 4 criteria to be included as an urgent near-term need: the cemeteries are a public safety issue, there is serious infrastructure failure (facilities, roads and irrigation), there is a significant degradation

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of services, and State law is not being followed. Section 713.011 of the Texas Health and Safety Code defines what the City must do for the upkeep of its cemeteries : THINGS NOT BEING DONE BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS: Sec. 713.011. MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL CEMETERIES. (a) A municipality that operates or has jurisdiction over a public cemetery shall maintain the cemetery in a condition that does not endanger the public health, safety, comfort, or welfare (b) A municipality's responsibility to maintain a cemetery under this section includes: (1) repairing and maintaining any fences, walls, buildings, roads, or other improvements; (2) leveling or straightening markers or memorials; (3) properly maintaining lawns, shrubbery, and other plants; (4) removing debris, including dead flowers and deteriorated plastic ornaments; and (5) promptly restoring gravesites following an interment. Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. [914](#), Sec. 14, eff. September 1, 2009.

Fully fund the Dougherty Center to \$4M. This was classified as an urgent near-term need, but it's only getting half of the funding that city staff identified.

Parks & Open Space – related comments

- Please consider funding open space acquisition rather than "affordable housing". Once open space is bulldozed and paved, it is gone forever. People don't love Austin because of the concrete and glass, they love it because of the beautiful trees, greenbelts and open spaces. There are many houses and apartments in Austin. Affordability can be achieved in creative ways, including by making sure utilities, taxes, transportation, and other necessities are not un-affordable. We need to have a dialogue in our community about what is best, rather than rushing to fund an orgy of development and construction of what may end up being neither affordable or livable. You know the hellish nightmare cities like Chicago and Detroit created for low income families by rushing in to poorly thought out "affordable housing" projects.
- I very much support the bulk of the package for recreation and open space, but with two major exceptions: a) While the Task Force reduced proposed funding for the Waller Creek District creek and trail improvements, I think this should be eliminated. The cost of the Waller project, which was to have included trail enhancements when it was originally sold to voters, has exploded six-fold and still does not include the enhancements. The project has become an outsized subsidy for a very few prospective developers, who would be the primary beneficiaries of this new bonanza of funding. If they want the amenities to support their development, then let them absorb the cost and pass it on to their tenants. This drain on City resources has gone far enough. b) Meanwhile, City-wide needs have been ignored. Use the \$15M saved from Waller to restore the \$22M needs assessment cost of the Neighborhood Parks Plan and Open Space item rather than reducing it by 50%, and restore the bulk of the Metropolitan Parks proposal. **Fully fund land acquisition for Watershed and PARD** even if city staff did not list this as an urgent near-term need. It's critical to purchase some land for preservation.
- \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation Full Funding for Parks.
- I support full funding for Parks, Trails and Open Space items, in particular the Violet Crown Trail. The natural infrastructure of Central Texas makes this a wonderful place to live, and is an engine of economic development buffering the downward swings of the business cycle.



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- As Austin continues to grow, it is critical that we continue to fund open space preservation. To that end, I strongly urge you to recommend that these items be included in the upcoming bond request: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks.
- I am a citizen in the great city of Austin and I am in full support for the Violet Crown Trail connections. Please consider my opinion/support for a key evolution of what Austin is all about!. We citizen live here for the bike/pedestrian trails, open space conservation and full funding for the parks. This is what make Austin different and humble from its neighboring cities. Lets keep Austin linked with nature as it always should be. I am in full support of: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks.
- As I citizen of the great city of Austin, Texas, I realize and strongly believe in the quality of our city's parks, open spaces, and alternative transportation routes. Please vote in favor of: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Project, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks
- As I've read that you are in the final round of "cuts" and will decide next week what bond package (and what funding amounts) to recommend to City Council in May, I am writing this email to encourage full support for the following programs:--\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Project, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks. While there are many worthy groups vying for the same support, I feel that these programs are especially important to maintain the reputation of Austin as a place to do lots of things outside, which will increase our appeal to tourists and people looking to move here, in addition to current residents who use these resources on a daily basis.
- This e-mail is to voice my support for the following, related to Austin parks, trails and open space: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. Thank you for **YOUR** support and consideration of continued funding for these important elements of the Austin community.
- Please consider this email my official endorsement for: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks. Thank you for your time and consideration on these issues important to Austin.
- Please save our trails. I support the Violet bond initiative as a central Texas voter.
- \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.
- I want to express my support for the following: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. Austin cannot become a truly great city without great parks, trails and open space. We will choke to death under our own popularity.
- I am emailing in full support of the following: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.

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- I am a physician working in Austin. I am writing to urge you to pursue the maximum achievable money for the conservation of open spaces and the Violet Crown Trail. In these times of wonderful growth of our community, it is so important that we preserve those qualities that make Austin so special and different from other large Texas cities. There is no doubt that projects like the Violet Crown Trail, the beautiful parks we enjoy, and the clean water and animal habitat that surrounds us are essential to the quality of life of its residents and our unique character. Please help balance the forces of sprawl and development that threaten this quality of life-
- I favor bikeways and parks; and I vote.
- Guys. Do the right thing and invest in parks and open space. Years later folks will thank you. Specifically, please support. \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Park
- I am writing to you in support of fully funding the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin. Please help make this community shine by providing: Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks
- Please fund the Violet Crown Trail.
- I just wanted to speak up for support of \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks.
- **I am writing to urge you to fully support the following budgets; please do not cut these items:**\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin;Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects;Full Funding for Open Space Conservation;Full Funding for Parks. **No one needs to be reminded that Austin is a quickly growing city, but if there is no funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects (let alone public transportation) we'll quickly turn into an even more sprawled-out city such as Houston or San Antonio. Please take the time to examine the headway made by similar cities in similar situations, such as Curitiba, Brazil and Portland, Oregon. The solutions in these places have made these cities so wonderful in so many ways. It's up to you and your colleagues to keep Austin from turning into a world of pavement and traffic/smog. I also urge all members of your committee to take time to consider urban growth boundaries, public transportation investments, and making use of existing infrastructure. Lastly, I think it's important to consider funding projects such as bioswales and eco-roofs in order to keep the runoff issues in check while at the same time keeping Austin beautiful and green. Thanks so much for your time, and I hope the folks who make the decisions can see past the money and work for the good of all humans.**
- Can't tell you how much we have watched and nurtured this extension of top notch trails in the Austin community. Here is Southwest Austin, we need you to put forth and support of the Violet Crown Trail project. We have trails that are marked and cleared ready for the next step! Southwest Austin is still preparing for this extension to south Austin area- truly showing a park within the City. The connection of Dick Nichols to the east on to the wild flower center is our particular interest-these park trails are used by the community and visitors. Let's make it happen! What a better show place- town lake and connection to Lady Bird Johnson Wild Flower Center and the Yellowway. Here here! For \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects-you all are doing such a great job all around town. Thank



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you!; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation- keep up the great work- so important for quality of life and austin vision described by Marc Ott- and approval of 3 million for violet crown is all a part of that. We pay taxes and endure the hikes- make ours a good "hike on the trail" priceless to us!

- Please help fund the violet crown trail and the bike/ped projects
- I support these projects and I believe they should be funded: -\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin - Full Funding for Bike/Ped Project -Full Funding for Open Space Conservation -Full Funding for Parks.
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- \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin□Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects□Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. Our city needs projects like these to truly show what a gem we have and how fortunate we are to live here! Nature rocks and Austin needs all the open spaces it can get to keep the nature close to home.
- **Please support...**\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects□Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks.
- As a resident of Austin, I wanted to let you know that I strongly support bonds to fund parks, trails and open space including: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin, Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects, Full Funding for Open Space Conservation, Full Funding for Parks
- On behalf of Hill Country Conservancy (HCC), please accept my grateful thanks for your extraordinary public service, perseverance, dedication and fortitude. Thank you! I write today to ask you to include **\$3mm for VCT Phase II, at least \$50mm for Open Space and at least \$110mm for Parks** in your funding recommendations to City Council, and I commend your policy recommendations. I may be a contrarian voice but I think the Austin City Council erred in asking you to craft a \$400mm package. I believe a \$400mm package is inadequate and short-sighted for a community that is # 1 on many “best cities” lists in America, especially considering that the population – and community “needs” – are increasing dramatically daily. **Providing funding for the Violet Crown Trail (VCT) will provide comprehensive multi-modal transportation neighborhood connectivity to libraries, parks and retail centers and safe routes to schools in south Austin. VCT will be the “trunk line” of an extensive ped/bike system that will connect the ped/bike bridge over Barton Creek, Travis Country, Oak Hill, Circle C, Sendera, Deer Park and many other neighborhoods – to LBJWC, the Veloway, Zilker Park and the Lady Bird Lake Butler Trail in addition to the connectivity previously mentioned. These connections are “past due” and merit full funding.** A recent nationwide telephone poll (see link below) found that 83 percent of those surveyed support federal funding for sidewalks and bike lanes, and that **91 percent of those under the age of 30 backed the spending** (Austin’s demographic!). Central Texas citizens, and particularly voters in bond elections, have

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responded favorably – and voted for! – parks, trails and open space funding for more than twenty years. Greenways and connectivity are the # 1 amenity sought by homebuyers according to homebuilder association polls. HCC has executed agreements pertaining to VCT with the cities of Austin and Sunset Valley, COA PARD, TPWD (\$200K funding); TxDOT and USFWS. VCT is in the CAMPO long-range plan. VCT was awarded \$105K ARRA funding (aka “stimulus”) to create a safe ped/bike crossing at U.S. Highway 290/Brodie. That crossing has been completed. COA PWs, using a \$300K federal grant obtained by HCC, is working to make the seven-mile segment of VCT Phase II (just south of Sunset Valley to Veloway/LBJWC) shovel ready by early next year. In addition to these public agencies, HCC is working closely with the Austin Parks Foundation, American YouthWorks and more than twenty other organizations and neighborhoods to get the Violet Crown Trail built – soon! Thank you again for your public service, and for your support of Parks, Greenways and Open Space.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/survey-federal-funds-for-bikes-pedestrians-have-strong-support/2012/05/09/gIQAnKwrCU_story.html

- I just want to register my support for the bonds for open space and trails. This is the most important issue to me. While I'm at it, I should mention how little I want the city funding a museum for each different ethnicity in the city, since that is the logical precedent you are setting.
- What distinguishes Austin, Texas from most cities in the country is our very pro-active and intentional protection of water, green and open space. This feature drives new tourists and outdoor enthusiasts into our city every day; attracts businesses with an employee base that values our outdoor culture, and supports the health and well being of nearly 2 million people. We need to continue to acquire and protect open space to ensure our continued regional leadership for land and resource protection and to ensure that we have clean and plentiful water for the future of our community.
- \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.
- My husband and I fully support the following bond proposals so please don't cut these recommendations; \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin □ Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects □ Full Funding for Open Space Conservation □ Full Funding for Parks.
- Earlier this month, I urged the Task Force members to support the Hill Country Conservancy's request for \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail -- and for \$175 million in new funding for parks and open space and for the Mopac Bicycle Bridge at Barton Creek, Phase 1 and 2. What I might have added and do wish to bring to your attention now is that creating the Violet Crown Trail will not only be a boon to recreationists but will, as well, benefit Central and South Austin's economy - restaurants, retail/bike shops, and, presumably, the hospitality sector broadly, to some degree. This isn't a simple matter of seeing the same old Austin bikers on a new trail, but a new gateway for hundreds if not thousands of new visitors who will be drawn by the significant new opportunities to engage in birding and other facets of nature tourism or, as I prefer terming it in my own work, heritage tourism, for the VCT "gateway" will create wonderful new chances to discover the wide array of scenic, agricultural, historic architectural, and other legacy elements along the 30+ miles greenway. And because of the quality and uniqueness of this draw, birders/ecotourists/heritage tourists and straightforward hikers and bikers will travel good distances to reach the VCT -- which is the rationale behind expecting they will likely spend on a lunch or dinner or other

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refreshment, indulge in some shopping while they're in South or Central Austin, and possibly take lodging for an overnight. Keep in mind, if you will, that in 2006, Texas ecotourism yielded \$15.8 billion. The figure will probably be close to \$17 billion for 2013. Some piece of this pie is Austin's. I firmly believe the VCT will be an important factor in ensuring that Central and South Austin will be beneficiaries of the VCT as an economic stimulus, however moderate this may be.

- Austin has always been an outdoor town. With the continued development we need to make sure we have continued growth of trails and open spaces to sustain the growing population. Please support \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin. Please fund Bike/Ped Projects, Please support funding for open space conservation and our parks Thank you for your attention to this critical matter,
- I support full funding in the upcoming bond package for: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. Austin is known as a green city. Please help us keep it that way. Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter.
- Please recommend full funding for open space conservation, for parks, for pedestrian and bike infrastructure projects, and \$3M specifically for the Violet Crown Trail. Individually and together these projects will enhance the liveability of Austin for people across the demographic and economic spectrums. I appreciate the many worthy needs addressed in competing projects in other categories, but I can think of no greater contributions through the bond-funded program to the region's evolving urban environment than those named above. Thanks to you all for the gift of your time and the diligence you've brought to your work on the Task Force.
- I write to you in support of inclusion in the bond package currently under development of funding for Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces. By way of background, I am an outdoorsman and outdoor athlete. I am a City of Austin retiree who retired with 20 years and 7 months of service from the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department. A significant part of my work there promoted physical activity and bicycling safety. Also, I am a homeowner in the East Oak Hill neighborhood, having lived there for 22 years. *In particular, my wife and I bicycle regularly in Oak Hill and South Austin. I especially support inclusion in the bond package of the full \$3 million dollar funding for the Violet Crown Trail as it will contribute the the further development of the bicycling infrastructure in central and south Austin. And, in general, I also support full inclusion of funding for parks and open spaces in the bond proposal. As an ex-COA employee, I understand the amount of work you all are doing to put the bond proposal together. Thank you very much to your service working to make our wonderful "outdoorsy" city even better.*
- I am a student at the DAC, and I thoroughly enjoy the fact that the building is centrally located, has it's own parking and is offering such great programs for students of all ages (myself being 65). I hope the city will build a replacement building in an equally central location and continue offering such valuable classes.
- I support..\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects□Full Funding for Open Space Conservation□Full Funding for Parks
- I support the following: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. I am a resident of Austin.

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- I fully support and urge all to support the following: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. I was in Atlanta this past weekend and know the outdoor spaces are what make a great city and insure happy people.
- As a resident of Central Austin, I fully support: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.
- I want to express my support for **Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces**. The beauty of Austin's parks, trails and open spaces is an inviting and unique feature that this city provides its residents and many visitors from all over the world. I strongly believe we should continue to foster the funding for such. Therefore, I fully support the following, \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.
- I am writing to urge you to recommend inclusion in the next bond package the following projects: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks. Austin is a great city in large part because of its parks, trails, and open space. As Austin's growth continues to outpace almost every other city in the country, the need for such projects remains paramount. Please recommend that our City Council approve bond funding for parks, trails, and open space. Thank you.
- I fully support the following: \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin; Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects; Full Funding for Open Space Conservation; Full Funding for Parks.

Transportation/Mobility - related comments

- Thank you for your hard work and concern for what is best for Austin and the people who live here. Please prioritize the following in this bond package: 1. Safety - please make sidewalks a priority. Sidewalks are a necessity, not a luxury. Even on the frontier, as soon as they had the resources to do so, towns added sidewalks. In a wonderful, modern city like Austin, pedestrians should not have to risk their lives walking in the street, or have to try to push their baby carriages through the weeds. 2. Responsibility - Please keep the bond as frugal as possible. Electric and water rates are on the rise, as is the cost of gasoline and food. We have all had to cut back and make choices. It's the right thing to do in this economic climate to keep the bond as small as possible. When times are better, there can be another bond that takes care of the luxuries. This one should really be about the bare necessities out of respect for the citizens of Austin who have all had to pare back their own personal luxuries. 3. Dignity - Most every one of us will be in a cemetery sooner or later. We need to respect those who have gone before us - it's the right & proper thing to do. It is shameful to allow our cemeteries to fall into disrepair. It is more fiscally responsible to take care of the deferred maintenance now, rather than allow them to reach a crisis stage. Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of all of us who live here.
- I perceive enormous requests for funding the Great Streets program has from the outset been factored into multiple categories to disguise its total cost. As I read the Task Force recommendations, it appears the group has wisely discarded the Sabine and Waller Creek Roadway projects. Again, if these costs are to be incurred, they should be borne by the beneficiary developments directly. But: a) The absorption of the primary Great Streets

request (originally \$90M, now \$46.5M) into the Public Works Street Reconstruction Program appears to be a particularly egregious case of disguising the intent of a focused proposal as one carrying city-wide infrastructure benefit. This work should be re-factored so that Public Works carries the cost of actual street and utility reconstruction, while amenity costs are removed from the bond program and the burden placed on the development projects benefitting from the amenities. Furthermore, TIF financing should not be considered as an alternative, as TIF's deprive the rest of the city from redevelopment increases in the tax base, unlike the case for development anywhere else in the City. b) The same treatment should be given to the \$18M East 6th Street amenities project, allowing the district's investors to shoulder primary burden rather than the general public.

- I support sidewalks first and trails second. Please consider in your decisions.
- Dear Bond Election Advisory Task Force Members, As Austin continues to grow daily, our means of getting around by our own cars in a timely manner is becoming extinct. Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state, so transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending a good portion of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. I drive around town during all times of the day with my job and if I ever get remotely close to the rush hours trying to get to meetings, I might as well be prepared to be very late or leave very far in advance, so any initiative we can take to move forward to help with our congestion will definitely be beneficial to everyone who has to be on the road. The last thing we want Austin to turn into is a Houston-like replica of traffic.
- Sidewalks are a basic need for many in Austin and should be given a higher priority than trails. While I respect that the bond task force wants to distribute the bond package throughout Austin in an equitable manner, the current spread of priorities remains disproportional. Many Austinites desperately need sidewalks so they do not have to walk in the streets, risking getting hit by cars.
- Please prioritize sidewalks over trails
- My husband and I have lived in Austin for 30 years. We are concerned about safety and affordability of the city. Please consider these priorities for all areas of the city. Sidewalks are urgently needed for safety in some sections; our children are our future. I urge you to reduce the amount of the proposed bond package to reign in spending and allow people to stay within the city limits.
- Dear Bond Election Advisory Task Force Members: Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I personally believe that traffic congestion will eventually choke growth and development where we all think density should be located, downtown. I would prefer not to see Austin develop in a sprawling manor. Without addressing traffic, I believe we jeopardize continued prosperity and create a further divide between the have and have-nots. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service and consideration of ideas from all constituents.

Other Comments

- In general, I think the City needs to stick to basics and get away from financing the frills for a select group of downtown investors. At the very least, these frills should be packaged and presented for judgement as distinct projects rather than being blended into more generic items to appear more akin to common infrastructure needs. Downtown is now healthy and capable of carrying its own weight for amenities. I look at the Montopolis neighborhood

where many residential streets have no side walks at all and our children either walk through some ones yard or in the streets. I look at the bond package and I realize sidewalks are used by children, the elderly and those too poor to have cars while trails are used by the upwardly mobile and the young Turks. I look at our rec center which was actually built by Delores Catholic Church to be used as a gym and catholic school and I look at the bond package from last year which included the Lady Bird Lake Boardwalk and bicycle lanes; again for the upwardly mobile young adults and the young Turks living in the inner core. I look at our Montopolis Neighborhood Plan and it's unfilled recommendations and unfulfilled dreams. I look at our Montopolis streets that either weren't built or fail to connect. I look at the entire South East quadrant of Austin with only one location with a traffic calming device which is according to City staff experimental and the low dollar version. I look at my electric bill which is already higher than it was this time last year. I look at my property tax bill and it too is higher in spite of a loss in value. I look at the homeless people on our street corners and their make shift cardboard tents hidden in the bushes. Then I look at the recommended bond package. This is a City of the well to do, both those who made it on their own and those who made it through their families place in life. And while I hope the F-1 provides a source of jobs in South East Austin; I also think of the status of the F-1 attendees and the contrast it illuminates between it's attendees and the average South East Austin resident. Austin which used to be a Mecca for UT students, hippies, cosmic cowboys and artists is now a City building for those who make a significantly more than the median Travis County income. Austin has become a City of those with a few gold coins in their pockets while the rest of us eat the crumbs off of their tables and are expected to be grateful for them.

- **Reduce the amount of the total bond package to \$100-200M maximum. Eliminate the "Design of New Projects (Congress Ave. and Rainey St.)" for \$10M.** This was not identified by city staff in the original bond package. Funding can be obtained for these projects from alternative sources (private/public partnerships). Citizens proposed additional projects like the Planetarium, but none of these were included in the package. I urge to, please, recommend a **wise small bond package of \$100-200M maximum.** Utility bills and taxes have increased significantly in the last 2 years, and many people like me can't afford additional increases. The bond capacity analysis provided by city staff predicts a tax increase that is not representative of what will really occur. The tax increase predicted (\$38 yearly for a \$200K home for a bond package of \$385M, \$83 for \$625M) is based on only increasing the tax bracket, but residential appraisals will increase which will create a much higher yearly tax increase for the citizens. This tax increase is for the rest of our lives, and it will get compounded with future tax increases to finance other bonds (urban rail) and for the city budget. It will snowball and soon, many people like me won't be able to afford to live in Austin. The city is doing a disservice to the citizens by not concentrating on providing the basic needs like providing sidewalks where there are none, repairing deteriorating sidewalks, updating existing sidewalks to be ADA compliant, and repairing deteriorating existing facilities. These should be the priorities for the bonds instead of more infrastructure that can't be maintained or trails that are not basic necessities compared to sidewalks. City staff has presented a long list of "urgent near-term needs" and other projects, every need and desire. And the citizens task force has included some of these near-term projects as well as many of the projects that city staff does not consider urgent, for a bond package totaling \$659M. This long list has to be narrowed down to valid "urgent needs". The city couldn't keep up with all of the projects if more than \$200M were approved because current city staff is already working as hard as they can. More city staff would have to be hired to manage the additional bond projects, but there are no FTEs open in the budget. This bond package will only create

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additional jobs for consultants and contractors, because the city can't hire additional staff unless more money is added to the budget. It is not wise to approve this extremely high bond package all at once. There is no doubt that each project is a good one and would benefit the citizens, but many neighborhoods in south, east and north Austin are missing the basics that a city should provide, like sidewalks and roads, so it's critical to prioritize and approve the very important and very needed projects only, and leave the luxuries for alternative funding (such as private partnerships). While this large bond package will be proposed, the city budget continues to be tight and not able to keep up with maintenance of current facilities. Every year, the city contemplates closing libraries and swimming pools, reduces the budget of the libraries and park department to the bare minimum. Consequently, heritage trees, parks, cemeteries and recreational facilities go without maintenance. Why is the city adding new facilities and trails when they can't maintain what we have? Please, eliminate from the bond package any project that was not classified as an "urgent near-term need" by city staff, with a few exemptions. See a list of these non-urgent items below.

- Bond Election Advisory Task Force Members, The Downtown Austin Alliance would like to thank you again for your work on the Task Force, especially now as you are making the tough decisions about projects to include in your recommendations. As you make further cuts tonight, we ask that you continue to prioritize projects that have high opportunities to leverage funds, whether from other governmental jurisdictions or from the private sector. We also ask that you maintain the process of fully funding priority projects and laying the foundation for future funding opportunities by funding preliminary design and engineering this cycle. We support a number of projects that remain on your list after committee recommendations and the first round of cuts. These projects will improve access to, mobility throughout, or the vitality of downtown Austin. The Downtown Austin Alliance priorities are, alphabetical order: **Design of new Projects (\$7m)**- We support this citywide consolidation of projects from Transportation, Public Works, and Planning Departments and appreciate that Congress Avenue was specifically called out. This will build on the vision created for Congress Avenue in 2010 by community advocates, Congress Avenue property and business owners, the City of Austin, and other stakeholders. It is wise to put design dollars in place so that projects are shovel-ready for future funding opportunities. **Downtown Squares (\$1m)** – The three remaining downtown squares need investment in basic infrastructure, including irrigation, lighting, seating, and other fundamental improvements. Such investments will allow organizations like ours and the Austin Parks Foundation to leverage this "seed" funding for additional private investment and continued volunteer efforts- with the goal of transforming our parks into community amenities that make us all proud and happy. **East 6th Street Streetscapes Improvements (\$18m)** – This project was recommended in the Downtown Austin Plan, and 2010 bonds funded preliminary design and engineering, based on extensive stakeholder input. This project will help the DAA in our retail recruitment efforts to enhance 6th Street's brand by adding a daytime mix of uses. It will also leverage the investment in the Waller Creek corridor by increasing connectivity. Funding construction now will build on earlier investments and transform the physical environment of E. 6th Street. **IH-35 Improvements (\$35m)** - This project will make operational improvements that will improve flow on IH-35, increasing mobility through central Austin, improving safety and efficiency, protecting air quality. Bond money for the IH-35 improvements will leverage money that will be spent on the project by the City's partners and maximize the benefits of work that is done on the highway. **Permanent Supportive Housing** – As part of an appropriately-sized Affordable Housing bond package covering all types of housing, we ask that you recommend a significant allocation for low-barrier, or Housing First, permanent



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supportive housing for those who have the greatest housing needs. It is a matter of life and death for our citizens who are living - and, unfortunately, dying - on our streets. **Street Reconstruction Program (\$46,500,000)** – We support this city- wide allocation and appreciate that four downtown projects have been included. These four projects have either already been designed or will complete connections in strategic locations. In addition to addressing failing streets and improving street surfaces, this program will also upgrade utilities and improve sidewalk connectivity and accessibility. **Waller Creek Improvements (current recommendations total \$12,000,000)** – We support the Parks & Open Space Committee recommendation of \$1 million each to go to Palm Park and Waterloo Park. While we understand that the need to weigh all the priorities led to a reduction from the original trail needs assessment of \$40,500,000 to \$10,000,000, we ask that you support the Waller Creek Trail with as large an allocation as possible. Because TIF finds will only pay for the underground flood control and water quality tunnel, it is essential that the City contribute toward the public realm, allowing Waller Creek Conservancy to leverage those investments by as much as 5 to 1 through contributions from land owners and developers, grants, and philanthropic donations, among other sources. We have never had such an exciting opportunity for transformation in our city, and these bond funds will help seed a capital campaign and other funding sources that will build a world- class destination for Austinites and visitors alike. Not all of these projects are contained within the boundaries of downtown, but all would create a significantly positive impact. Downtown Austin is truly everyone's neighborhood. More than 20% of Austin's workforce works downtown, and it would take an area twelve times the size of downtown Austin to generate the same amount in ad valorem taxes alone. We ask that you forward these committee supported projects to the City Council, and again, we thank you for your time and dedication.